

# ***God's Mission My Mission***

## ***Mission to the Powerful***

Lesson #9 for December 2, 2023

Scriptures: Daniel 4; 2 Kings 5:1-19; John 3:1-12; 7:42-52; 19:38-42; Matthew 19:16-22.

1. Who are the powerful? Would that include mainly military leaders? Or, kings? Or, business leaders? What kinds of people are struggling to control the world or at least a portion of it? What does the Bible say about people like that? Do gains in this world cancel the possibility of gains in the future life?

**Matthew 16:26:** Will people gain anything if they win the whole world but lose their life? Of course not! There is nothing they can give to regain their life.— American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Matthew 16:26). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>‡</sup>

2. So many people among Christians are hoping that they can have a maximum amount of this world and still enjoy heaven in the future.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Though written many years ago, the Bible, the Word of God, is the revelation of God's truth for our world. And among the many truths it reveals is that of human nature, and that—whether in seventh-century Judea or twenty-first-century Brazil—people are basically the same: sinners in need of divine grace.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, November 25.<sup>‡</sup>

3. How many rich/powerful people can you think of who are mentioned in the Bible? Let us look at the examples of some of them:

4. **Nebuchadnezzar:** we cannot even imagine the life and situation in which Nebuchadnezzar lived. To rule the world and to be worshiped as a god is beyond our comprehension. But, God recognized that He could reach Nebuchadnezzar through Daniel. And God is doing everything He can to save as many as possible.

**1 Timothy 2:4:** Who wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth.— *Good News Bible.\**

**1 John 2:2:** And Christ himself is the means by which our sins are forgiven, and not our sins only, but also the sins of everyone.—*Good News Bible.\**

**Ephesians 1:4:** Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him.—*Good News Bible.\**

5. Do we really believe that God would like everyone to be saved?
6. Nebuchadnezzar was the most prominent king in the ancient Babylonian kingdom. He was king for longer than all of his successors combined. And he was prone to having dreams given by God.
7. Daniel 4 tells the story of how Nebuchadnezzar and his boastful pride was visited by God and warned that a terrible time was coming when he would lose his kingship. The giant

tree that represented him was cut down, but a stump was left. And Daniel reminded him of what it meant and that one day he would return to his powerful position.

8. One year after the dream, reality hit; Nebuchadnezzar was turned into someone acting like an animal. But, eventually—we do not know what all happened—Nebuchadnezzar came to his senses and praised God with wonderful words:

**Daniel 4:34-37:** <sup>34</sup> “When the seven years had passed,” said the king, “I looked up at the sky, and my sanity returned. I praised the Supreme God and gave honour and glory to the one who lives for ever.

“He will rule for ever, and his kingdom will last for all time.

<sup>35</sup> He looks on the people of the earth as nothing;  
angels in heaven and people on earth are under his control.

No one can oppose his will or question what he does.

<sup>36</sup> “When my sanity returned, my honour, my majesty, and the glory of my kingdom were given back to me. My officials and my noblemen welcomed me, and I was given back my royal power, with even greater honour than before.

<sup>37</sup> “And now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, honour, and glorify the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right and just, and he can humble anyone who acts proudly.” —*Good News Bible*.\*

9. Imagine God while ruling the universe, nevertheless, taking time to go through several steps to reach out to Nebuchadnezzar in his situation. Do you expect to see Nebuchadnezzar in heaven?
10. Contrast the story of Nebuchadnezzar with the story of three of the Hebrew Kings: Hezekiah, Rehoboam and Saul. Saul was so proud and so self-centered that he could not accept guidance even from God Himself. We know the terrible story of his finally going to the witch of Endor and the next day dying in battle.
11. Hezekiah also had his problems:

**2 Chronicles 32:25-26:** <sup>25</sup> But Hezekiah was too proud to show gratitude for what the Lord had done for him, and Judah and Jerusalem suffered for it.

<sup>26</sup> Finally, however, Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem humbled themselves, and so the Lord did not punish the people until after Hezekiah’s death.—*Good News Bible*.\*

12. Solomon’s son Rehoboam allowed all sorts of pagan worship to develop during his kingship, until finally the country had almost turned into a pagan nation.

**1 Kings 14:21-24:** <sup>21</sup> Solomon’s son Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king of Judah, and he ruled for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen from all the territory of Israel as the place where he was to be worshipped. Rehoboam’s mother was Naamah from Ammon.

<sup>22</sup> The people of Judah sinned against the Lord and did more to arouse his anger against them than all their ancestors had done. <sup>23</sup>**They built places of worship for false gods, and put up stone pillars and symbols of**

**Asherah to worship on the hills and under shady trees. <sup>24</sup>Worst of all, there were men and women who served as prostitutes at those pagan places of worship. The people of Judah practiced all the shameful things done by the people whom the Lord had driven out of the land as the Israelites advanced into the country.—Good News Bible.\*†**

13. It is interesting to note that each of these powerful men had interactions with God or one of His prophets themselves. Do people in our day have those kinds of direct interactions with God?
14. The story of **Naaman**, the leper/general in the Syrian army is fairly familiar. Christ Himself talked about Naaman when He went back to preach His final sermon in Nazareth, His hometown.

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Few realize the full meaning of the words that Christ spoke when, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He announced Himself as the Anointed One. **He declared His mission to comfort, bless, and save the sorrowing and the sinful; and then, seeing that pride and unbelief controlled the hearts of His hearers, He reminded them that in time past God had turned away from His chosen people because of their unbelief and rebellion, and had manifested Himself to those in heathen lands who had not rejected the light of heaven. The widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian had lived up to all the light they had; hence they were accounted more righteous than God's chosen people who had backslidden from Him and had sacrificed principle to convenience and worldly honor.—Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles\* 416.3.††**

15. Naaman was a powerful general in charge of the Syrian army. And yet, when he heard of the possibility that someone in Israel could heal him of his disease, he was willing to listen to a slave maiden for directions. He traveled to Israel with an enormous offering to pay for his healing. But, Elisha would not accept it. Elisha asked him simply to go and wash himself in the Jordan River, dipping seven times.
16. In 2 Kings 5:17-19, we notice two very interesting conclusions to the whole story: (1) In ancient times, it was believed that gods were assigned to different territories in the world. In order to worship a certain god, one had to be in his/her territory. So, Naaman asked if it was possible for him to carry two mule loads of soil from Israel back to Syria so he could worship God on God's own ground. Clearly, Naaman was convinced that the God of Israel—*Yahweh*—was far superior to any of the other gods he knew about. So, he chose to worship the true God even in his own country.
17. But Naaman, being the general of the army, followed the king around in pretty much all of his activities. So, he requested that God would forgive him if he had attended the king of Syria when the king went to worship the god Rimmon. He did not want *Yahweh* to think that he was worshipping any other god. And Elisha told him to “go in peace.”

[BSG:] “These words must not be thought of as either expressing approval or disapproval of Naaman's parting request. He was to depart in peace, not in doubt or restless uncertainty. God had been kind to him, and he was to

find happiness and peace in his knowledge and worship of God. Naaman was a new convert, a man with conscientious scruples, who would grow in strength and wisdom if he clung to his new-found faith. God leads new converts on step by step, and knows the appropriate moment in which to call for a reform in a certain matter. This principle ought always to be borne in mind by those who labor for the salvation of souls.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 878.*—[as quoted in *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, November 27].‡

18. ***To whom would Naaman turn for learning about the true God? To his servant maiden?***

[BSG:] What lessons should we learn from this story about not pushing people too quickly, especially those who come from a non-Christian background?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday, November 27.‡

19. Think of the impact that that young slave maiden who worked for Naaman’s wife has had on the world.

[EGW:] “Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper.”

Ben-hadad, king of Syria, had defeated the armies of Israel in the battle which resulted in the death of Ahab. Since that time the Syrians had maintained against Israel a constant border warfare, and in one of their raids they had carried away a little maid who, in the land of her captivity, “waited on Naaman’s wife.” A slave, far from her home, this little maid was nevertheless one of God’s witnesses, unconsciously fulfilling the purpose for which God had chosen Israel as His people. As she ministered in that heathen home, her sympathies were aroused in behalf of her master; and, remembering the wonderful miracles of healing wrought through Elisha, she said to her mistress, “Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.” She knew that the power of Heaven was with Elisha, and she believed that by this power Naaman could be healed.

**The conduct of the captive maid, the way that she bore herself in that heathen home, is a strong witness to the power of early home training. There is no higher trust than that committed to fathers and mothers in the care and training of their children. Parents have to do with the very foundations of habit and character. By their example and teaching the future of their children is largely decided.**

Happy are the parents whose lives are a true reflection of the divine, so that the promises and commands of God awaken in the child gratitude and reverence; the parents whose tenderness and justice and long-suffering interpret to the child the love and justice and long-suffering of God, and who by teaching the child to love and trust and obey them, are teaching him to

love and trust and obey his Father in heaven. Parents who impart to the child such a gift have endowed him with a treasure more precious than the wealth of all the ages, a treasure as enduring as eternity.

We know not in what line our children may be called to serve. They may spend their lives within the circle of the home; they may engage in life's common vocations, or go as teachers of the gospel to heathen lands; but all are alike called to be missionaries for God, ministers of mercy to the world. They are to obtain an education that will help them to stand by the side of Christ in unselfish service.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*\* 244.1-245.3.‡

20. It is interesting to notice Elisha's exchange with Naaman. He did not try to give Naaman a lot of information about the worship of the true God. He just said, "Go in peace." Where did Naaman get his later information about the truth?
21. In the New Testament, one of the outstanding wealthy individuals was **Nicodemus**. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the ruling council, the Sanhedrin. He was recognized by his community as being faithful to God, keeping all the commandments, he was a respected leader among the Jews. He was powerful and wealthy. So it was assumed that he was a good man because God was blessing them.
22. **Nicodemus** was a Pharisee and most of the Pharisees were constantly at odds with Jesus. Do you think that it is possible that Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees that had been delegated to try to trap Jesus at one time or another? There were a lot of Pharisees who later realized that they had been on the wrong side and chose to become faithful believers, even church leaders.
- Acts 6:7:** And so the word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem grew larger and larger, and a great number of priests accepted the faith.—*Good News Bible*.\*
- Acts 15:5:** But some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and told to obey the Law of Moses."—*Good News Bible*.\*
23. The story of Nicodemus's first visit with Jesus as recorded in John 3:1-21 is very familiar. John 3:16, in the middle of that story, is perhaps the best-known Bible verse of all time.
24. Remember that Nicodemus had probably memorized much of the Old Testament in Hebrew, and he knew all the rules and teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But, he still felt a spiritual need. He was honest enough to recognize that Jesus was at least a great teacher and possibly the Messiah. Nicodemus came to Jesus with his usual façade as one of the leaders of Israel. But, Jesus paid no attention to the façade. He responded to Nicodemus by pointing out to him that he still needed to understand what true religion is all about.

**John 7:43-52:** <sup>43</sup>So there was a division in the crowd because of Jesus. <sup>44</sup>Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

<sup>45</sup> When the guards went back, the chief priests and Pharisees asked them, "Why did you not bring him?"

<sup>46</sup> The guards answered, “Nobody has ever talked like this man!”

<sup>47</sup> “Did he fool you, too?” the Pharisees asked them. <sup>48</sup> “Have you ever known one of the authorities or one Pharisee to believe in him? <sup>49</sup> This crowd does not know the Law of Moses, so they are under God’s curse!”

<sup>50</sup> One of the Pharisees there was **Nicodemus**, the man who had gone to see Jesus before. He said to the others, <sup>51</sup> “According to our Law we cannot condemn anyone before hearing him and finding out what he has done.”

<sup>52</sup> “Well,” they answered, “are you also from Galilee? Study the Scriptures and you will learn that no prophet ever comes from Galilee.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

25. Nicodemus did not let it be known that he was a follower of Jesus. But, on several occasions, he raised questions that prevented the Pharisees from taking action against Jesus. Finally, when Jesus died, Nicodemus went to the aid of the disciples and did for Jesus what they could not have done.

**John 19:39:** Nicodemus, who at first had gone to see Jesus at night, went with Joseph, taking with him about 30 kilogrammes of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

[EGW:] After the Lord’s ascension, when the disciples were scattered by persecution, Nicodemus came boldly to the front. He employed his wealth in sustaining the infant church that the Jews had expected to be blotted out at the death of Christ. In the time of peril he who had been so cautious and questioning was firm as a rock, encouraging the faith of the disciples, and furnishing means to carry forward the work of the gospel. **He was scorned and persecuted by those who had paid him reverence in other days. He became poor in this world’s goods; yet he faltered not in the faith which had its beginning in that night conference with Jesus. [Why do you think Nicodemus decided to go and see Jesus secretly?]**

Nicodemus related to John the story of that interview, and by his pen it was recorded for the instruction of millions. The truths there taught are as important today as they were on that solemn night in the shadowy mountain, when the Jewish ruler came to learn the way of life from the lowly Teacher of Galilee.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*<sup>\*</sup> 177.2.<sup>†‡</sup>

26. Another well-known story in the Bible paints a very different picture.

**Matthew 19:16-22:** <sup>16</sup> Once a man came to Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what good thing must I do to receive eternal life?”

<sup>17</sup> “Why do you ask me concerning what is good?” answered Jesus. “There is only One who is good. Keep the commandments if you want to enter life.”

<sup>18</sup> “What commandments?” he asked.

Jesus answered, “Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not accuse anyone falsely; <sup>19</sup> respect your father and your mother; and love your neighbour as you love yourself.”

<sup>20</sup> “I have obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else do I need to do?”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me.”

<sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he was very rich.—*Good News Bible*.\*

27. What a contrast with the story of Nicodemus. Which of these two stories most clearly represents a typical human response?

28. Why do you suppose this rich young man rejected Jesus? Remember that in Jesus’s day, it was believed that if you were rich and powerful, you were obviously a good person because God was blessing you. So, when Jesus said: “Sell all your goods, and give to the poor,” He was asking him to give up all the evidence that he had that he was a good man and to live as if he were a sinner, rejected by God!

29. Why is it that it is so difficult for the rich and powerful to be saved?

**Matthew 19:23-24:** <sup>23</sup> Jesus then said to his disciples, “I assure you: it will be very hard for rich people to enter the Kingdom of heaven. <sup>24</sup>I repeat: it is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

[BSG:] In the end, the rich and the poor face the same fate: the grave. This means that the rich are in as desperate need of salvation as is anyone else. Whatever else money can buy, it cannot buy an exemption from death. That exemption comes only as a gift, offered freely by Jesus to whoever will claim it by faith. “ ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live’ ” (*John 11:25, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, November 29.†§

30. Another rich man that Jesus had some direct contact with was Zacchaeus.

**Luke 19:1-10:** <sup>1</sup> Jesus went on into Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>There was a chief tax collector there named Zacchaeus, who was rich. <sup>3</sup>He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a little man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a Sycamore tree to see Jesus, who was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to Zacchaeus, “Hurry down, Zacchaeus, because I must stay in your house today.”

<sup>6</sup> Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him with great joy. <sup>7</sup>All the people who saw it started grumbling, “This man has gone as a guest to the home of a sinner!”

<sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Listen, sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay back four times as much.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, also, is a descendant of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

31. What a contrast to the response of the rich young ruler.

32. What do you suppose Zacchaeus knew about Jesus? Why did he respond in the way he did? Jesus did not ask him to give up anything; but, Zacchaeus was willing to give up a major portion of his riches!
33. And there were others among the rich who are attracted to Jesus. Think of the story of Joseph of Arimathea. We know nothing about him except what he did after Jesus was dead although he may have joined Nicodemus in defending Jesus before the Sanhedrin. His brief story is mentioned in Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:43-47; Luke 23:50-53; and John 19:38-42.
34. Let us not forget Matthew 16:26.

**Matthew 16:26:** Will people gain anything if they win the whole world but lose their life? Of course not! There is nothing they can give to regain their life.—*Good News Bible*.\*

[BSG:] Jesus knew how to make friends with the powerful. He was admired and respected by many of these people and, at the same time, was also despised by many. The powerful people in the Bible who came to Jesus for help surely sensed that He cared for them. Also, many of the rich and powerful did not openly come to Jesus right away; they waited until they were certain that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Such was the case both with Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, November 30.

35. ***Why do you think rich and powerful men like Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Zacchaeus, Matthew, and others were attracted to Jesus?***
36. Apparently, Joseph, like Nicodemus had been a secret admirer and follower of Jesus. We basically know nothing else about him except the fact that he offered to allow Jesus to be buried in his family tomb and helped Nicodemus and the disciple John to take the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it.
37. So, how should we approach rich people?

[BSG:] Where to begin can be one of the most difficult phases in making friends with powerful people. In general, it is better not to pursue them; let them come to you. Jesus did this; they became a witness to His message, healing, and power from God. They were convinced behind the scenes that He is truly the Son of God.

Powerful people will seek to partner with genuine ministry for a number of reasons. They want to be part of something good that is changing the lives of people. This is one way they know that it can also change their lives. It provides a subtle way for the rich and powerful to get the help they need without publicly disclosing their needs.

The second phase is to begin a genuine ministry as an avenue for the rich and powerful to be part of God's ministry. Take some time to invest in the lives of the rich and powerful in your society.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, November 30.‡

38. What could we do to try to reach out to some wealthier, powerful people in our society in our day?

[BSG:] Challenge: Add someone to your daily prayer list who is in a position of power, is not a believer, and is someone you could come in contact with from time to time.

Challenge Up: Address a letter or email to someone in a position of power—even if it is someone you may never have met—and tell that person that you are praying for him or her.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday, November 30.‡

39. While it seems obvious, sometimes we overlook the fact that Jesus loves everyone the same. rich or poor, powerful, or helpless. Princes, as well as paupers. Every one of us needs salvation that only God can offer.

40. So, why did Jesus say it is so difficult for a rich person be saved?

**Mark 10:25:** “It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

[EGW:] Much is said concerning our duty to the neglected poor; should not some attention be given to the neglected rich? Many look upon this class as hopeless, and they do little to open the eyes of those, who, blinded and dazed by the glitter of earthly glory, have lost eternity out of their reckoning. Thousands of wealthy men have gone to their graves unwarned. But indifferent as they may appear, many among the rich are soul-burdened. “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase.” He that says to fine gold, “Thou art my confidence,” has “denied the God that is above.” “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever).” Ecclesiastes 5:10; Job 31:24, 28; Psalm 49:7, 8.—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*\* 210.1.‡

41. ***How do we as Adventists try to reach across the gap, even in our society, between the rich and the poor? What did Jesus mean when He talked about the “deceitfulness of riches”? Are only the rich deceived by “the deceitfulness of riches”?***

42. Jesus recognized that it wouldn’t be easy for naturally selfish human beings to become His faithful followers and receive a reward in heaven.

43. Matthew 16:24-28 suggest that we must, in fact, take up the cross if we want to follow Jesus.

**Luke 14:25-33:** <sup>25</sup> Once when large crowds of people were going along with Jesus, he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>“Those who come to me cannot be my disciples unless they love me more than they love father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and themselves as well. <sup>27</sup>Those who do not carry their own cross and come after me cannot be my disciples.

<sup>28</sup> “If one of you is planning to build a tower, you sit down first and work out what it will cost, to see if you have enough money to finish the job. <sup>29</sup>If you don’t, you will not be able to finish the tower after laying the foundation; and

all who see what happened will laugh at you. <sup>30</sup>'This man began to build but can't finish the job!' they will say.

<sup>31</sup> "If a king goes out with ten thousand men to fight another king who comes against him with twenty thousand men, he will sit down first and decide if he is strong enough to face that other king. <sup>32</sup>If he isn't, he will send messengers to meet the other king, to ask for terms of peace while he is still a long way off. <sup>33</sup>**In the same way," concluded Jesus, "none of you can be my disciple unless you give up everything you have."**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

44. Paul recognized the challenge that Jesus was addressing when he wrote 1 Timothy 6:10:

**1 Timothy 6:10:** For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

45. Jesus wants all there is of us. We cannot place our personal priorities over Him or we will lose salvation. We are expected to die daily to self-interest, selfish desires, and any ambitions that would hinder our relationship with Him.

46. ***If you had to choose, right now, to die and be saved, or to live on and be lost, what would you say? What would you choose?***

[BSG:] Jesus also demands of His followers a devotion that surpasses their instinct to preserve their own lives. Disciples must prioritize their devotion to Jesus over life itself. As a symbol of an unavoidable and most excruciating death, taking one's cross to follow Jesus epitomizes a commitment to the highest possible cost of being His disciple. Just as carrying a literal cross was an act of submitting to the Romans, taking one's cross to follow Jesus refers to Jesus' call for His disciples' total submission to Him.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*<sup>\* 119-120.†</sup>

47. Let us never forget that every person who exists on our world is a child of God. He would like to save every one of them. In the Bible we know of many people who were wealthy, Abraham, Isaac, Job, David in the Old Testament. Matthew, Barnabas, Paul, the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius the Roman centurion in the New Testament. There were of course many others. Think of the story of Paul who went from being a member of the Sanhedrin, a wealthy and well-liked young man to being the apostle to the Gentiles!

48. Jesus recognized that even to His disciples, He could not give too much information in a short period of time. See John 16:12.

[EGW:] Take One Point at a Time.--Teachers of the Word of God are not to keep back any part of the counsel of God, lest the people shall be ignorant of their duty and not understand what is the will of God concerning them, and stumble and fall into perdition. But while the teacher of truth should be faithful in presenting the gospel, let him never pour out a mass of matter which the people cannot comprehend because it is new to them and hard to understand. Take one point at a time, and make that one point plain, speaking slowly and in a distinct voice. Speak in such a way that the people shall see what is the relation of that one point to other truths of vital

importance.... It will be difficult to create prejudice in the hearts of those who are seeking for truth as for hidden treasure, if the speaker will hide himself in Christ; for he will then reveal Christ, not himself.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript 39*,\* 1895; *Evangelism*\* 201.3.‡

49. So, what have we learned from this lesson that might help us in our day-by-day lives?

[BSG:] As Christians, it is important that the way we relate to money and all that it can afford does not hinder our relationship with God. Here are two things we need to keep in mind in relation to money: (1) the fragility of earthly investments: all the acquisition the world has to offer (pleasure, security, power, etc.) is fleeting; and (2) on the day we appear before God and render an account of our lives, we will be evaluated by the health of our souls rather than by the wealth of our estates.

Because God is no respecter of persons, He still longs for rich and powerful people to become Christ's disciples. What God cares about most is not what is in a person's hand but what is in his or her heart. Bible examples of rich and powerful people teach us that this category of people also can be receptive to the gospel. It is the responsibility of committed believers both to pray that God will directly intervene in the witnessing process in order to reach powerful unbelievers and also to avail themselves to the Holy Spirit to become bridges to reach them.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 122.‡

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